NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1360

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Automatic Electric Company Building
OTHER NAMES/SITE NUMBER:

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 1001 West Van Buren
NOT FOR PUBLICATION N/A
CITY OR TOWN Chicago
VICINITY
STATE IL **CODE** IL **COUNTY** Cook **ZIP CODE** 60623

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally ___ statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Wheeler /SHPO — 10-2-02

Signature of certifying official — Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

✓ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
Beth Boland — 11/20/02

___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain): _____

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:

_X Building(s)
___ District
___ Site
___ Structure
___ 0bject

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
BUILDINGS	1	0
SITES	0	0
STRUCTURES	0	0
OBJECTS	0	0
TOTAL	**1**	**0**

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: INDUSTRY/ Communications Facility

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: INDUSTRY/ Manufacturing Facility
Work-in-progress

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Commercial Style

MATERIALS:

FOUNDATION: Stone
ROOF: Asphalt
WALLS: Brick
OTHER : Terra Cotta

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION: **See Continuation Sheets**

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA:

X ***A.*** *Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.*
___***B.*** *Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.*
___***C.*** *Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.*
___***D.*** *Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.*

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

___***A.*** *Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.*
___***B.*** *Removed from its original location.*
___***C.*** *A birthplace or a grave.*
___***D.*** *A cemetery.*
___***E.*** *A reconstructed building, object, or structure.*
___***F.*** *A commemorative property.*
___***G.*** *Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.*

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: COMMUNICATIONS
INVENTION

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1901-1952 **SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1901, 1907

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: **See Continuation Sheets**

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY: **See Continuation Sheets**

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A
___ *preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.*
___ *previously listed in the National Register*
___ *previously determined eligible by the National Register*
___ *designated a National Historic Landmark*
___ *recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #* _____
___ *recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #* _____

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA

___ *State Historic Preservation Office*
___ *Federal agency*
___ *University*
___ *Other State agency*
___ *Local Government: Commission on Chicago Landmarks*
X *Other: Name of repository:* Chicago Historical Society

7. DESCRIPTION

The Site

The Automatic Electric Company Building is a six-story brick light industrial building covering a half block area at the southwest corner of Van Buren and Morgan streets in the Near West Side community of Chicago. The Near West Side is a few blocks west of the south branch of the Chicago River, which defines the western boundary of the Loop. The area was built up during the latter part of the nineteenth century with light industrial buildings housing many different types of businesses. The Automatic Electric Company Building consists of the original structure completed in 1901, and a 1907 addition with a narrow (originally) drive-through annex connecting it to the originál building. The buildings fill the lot to the sidewalks. The addition is also six stories, carefully designed to be compatible to the original. The narrow bridging annex, which originally opened to a courtyard at the rear, was enclosed in the 1950s to form interior loading docks, and the drive-through entrance on Van Buren Street was enclosed with a glass-framed entrance system. The west wall of the addition is not visible, since it adjoins a 1980s infill structure. The rear, south elevation faces onto Tilden Street, which now serves only as an alley behind the buildings, but is parallel to the Eisenhower Expressway, completed in the 1950s.

1901 Construction

The original 1901 building is of mill construction. The brick exterior presents a symmetrical facade with five bays facing Van Buren Street, and ten bays extending south along Morgan Street. The most notable features of the building are the uniform regularity of the articulated structural bays, the golden color of the brick, the extensive decorative brickwork that covers the facade, and the Classical Revival details. The north and east street facades are treated similarly. Each bay of the north and east facades is slightly recessed within piers that are continuous from the second story to the top of the building. Within each bay is a set of tri-partite, double-hung windows divided only by mullions. The lower levels of the building retain the original wood one-over-one windows, while most of those of the upper three stories were replaced in the mid-1980s with metal. The metal windows, in the original openings and configuration, are also one-over-one, double-hung windows. The brick of the building facade is smooth, golden colored slightly elongated brick laid with thin butter joints in a monochromatic mortar. The continuous piers and corners of the building are decorated with brick laid in a pattern to resemble courses of rusticated stone, appearing as quoins on the corners. Between floors, the brick of the recessed spandrels is corbelled in a decorative geometric pattern of connected squares. The cornice of the building is simple, smooth brickwork accentuated at the top and base with a thin beltcourse of limestone. Outlining each facade is a delicate row of corbelling that extends from the outer corner of the second story, up and around the top just below the cornice, and down the other corner.

A wide, projecting belt course delineates the ground floor from the upper stories and serves as a base for the upper-story piers, although the piers of the first floor follow the same lines and spacing. Within

each of the piers at the first floor are plate-glass windows set on metal panels, and topped with transoms. The plate-glass windows are divided by a single mullion, while the transoms are divided yet again into four panes. The central opening on the north elevation, originally the main entrance, has received this same treatment within the original decorative surround and hood, except that the transom is only in two sections. Also, the westernmost bay has been infilled with a solid material. On the east facade, the northernmost bay is treated the same as the north facade, while the remaining bays have four double-hung windows in each bay. The piers of the ground floor are also faced with brick laid to resemble stone, but resemble the coursing of smooth stone rather than rusticated. This coursing is achieved by recessing every eighth course, as opposed to every fifth course on the upper stories.

In contrast to the strict balance and geometry of the building facades, the limestone entrance surround is ornamented with foliated features. Blocks of limestone project slightly from the facade, forming a trabeated arch decorated with several levels of egg and dart and acanthus leaf designs. At the top, the belt course projects yet further, forming a hood over the entrance which is visually supported by two large intricately carved brackets. They are embellished with foliated designs including scrolls and acanthus leaves.

West and South Elevations

The west elevation of the original 1901 building is hidden from view since it adjoins the 1907 connecting annex. Evidence of original window openings are apparent in the interior. On the south, rear, elevation, the top three stories of all three structures have the same fenestration pattern as the east and north facades, with sets of tri-partite double-hung windows. The common brick facings of the south elevations of all structures on the block, including the original 1901 building, the 1907 addition and the newer rear wall of the connecting annex have been parged over, combining them as one continuous wall. In 1984 mural artist Richard Haas was commissioned to paint a mural on the combined exterior south wall. This mural covers the face of the second and third stories, and the piers between the windows of the upper stories. In a few places on the second and third stories, the mural is punctured with vent openings. Otherwise the mural remains but has become deteriorated as the parging has spalled, revealing deterioration of the brick and mortar underneath.

Interior

The interior of the building is of loft construction, with a combination of wood columns and tile columns encased in plaster, topped with iron caps that support the wood beams. Others are hung from iron straps. The ceiling heights range from 12 to 15 feet to the wooden decks. On the second floor, round plaster columns are smoothly finished and are capped with decorative moldings. Square plaster pads rest on the columns and support the wood beams above. The original equipment for the manufacture of telephone switching mechanisms has been removed, and the building has undergone remodeling over the years. On a few floors, the columns and ceilings are revealed as original, while others have suspended tile ceilings and finished partition walls. The floor plans are generally wide

open except for partition walls. Brick load-bearing walls separate each of the 1901 and 1907 structures, with openings that connect the floors at certain points. The floor levels are the same between the structures.

1907 Additions
The 1907 additions were designed to be compatible to the original, employing the same height, materials, massing, scale, and cellular facade design. Using a golden brick much like the original, the connecting annex originally extended to about a fourth of the depth of the building. In plan, the front is recessed slightly from the facade of the original building. It is treated as one bay, faced in smooth brick, with a set of five, double-hung, one-over-one windows at each level. The masonry opening of the original drive-through at ground level remains, but has been filled in with a new metal-framed glass entry system, and serves as the main entrance to the building.

The addition to the west, also constructed in 1907, projects from the annex to be flush with the face of the original building. Of the same size and height, it too has five bays on the north elevation, and repeats the design of tri-partite windows within each bay. Again, the piers are continuous and slightly projecting from the second story to the top. The primary difference is that the brick is not laid in decorative patterns to resemble stone, and both the piers and the spandrels are smooth. There is, however, a broad belt course dividing the upper stories from the ground floor, and the ground floor piers are laid in the same pattern of every eighth recessed brick to resemble smooth stone courses. The ground floor windows are also treated the same as those of the original section. The thin belt course delineating the cornice extends from the original building across the connecting portion and the west building, forming a continuous, unifying line.
As mentioned, the connecting annex originally extended only about a fourth of the depth of the other two buildings, forming a "U" shape with an interior courtyard at the rear. In about 1950, that courtyard was filled in with a concrete construction so that the building now forms a completely filled in rectangle.

The west elevation of the 1907 addition is hidden from view since it now adjoins 1980s infill construction that was built connecting to the building on its west. Evidence of original window openings is apparent in the interior.

The 1907 additions are also of mill construction, with interiors much like that of the 1901 original. With ceiling heights of 12 to 15 feet and much open space, the buildings are currently used for a variety of light manufacturing purposes. The 1907 connecting structure has elevators and stairs that connect all levels. There are loading docks to the rear at the first floor.

The building has a great degree of integrity, both in its interior structural system and exterior facades. As mentioned, the rear courtyard was filled in about 1950, which is within the period of significance. It

is not known when the original entrance door was first altered, but most of the current altered conditions in the ground floor entrances and windows were made ca. 1984, when the property was purchased by the Reliable Corporation. Reliable also remodeled the current main entrance in the connecting portion and the interior behind the entrance to form a lobby, and commissioned the mural on the south elevation which is now in poor condition. Some of the interior finishes and partition floor plans have been remodeled over the years, but according to historic photographs dating from 1903, the interior spaces were always simple and basically unfinished.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Summary of Significance

The Automatic Electric Company Building has national significance under criterion A for its history in communications and invention, as the home of the company that developed, refined and disseminated the automatic dial telephone system. Known as the Strowger System, it changed communications throughout the world. The building is significant from 1901, when the company was chartered and the original building was constructed, until 1952, when the company still resided in the building and was celebrating 60 years of the "Strowger Automatic Telephone System." The Automatic Electric Company Building is the building most closely associated with the history of the company. By 1903 when the company perfected the automatic dial system, Germany had rights to the Strowger system, and by 1911 the company had systems in Australia, South America, Canada, England, France, Africa, India, China, Cuba, Argentina and the Philippines, as well as throughout the United States including Alaska and Hawaii. As the largest telephone equipment manufacturer for the independent telephone companies, Automatic Electric Company was also instrumental in fostering the early success of the independent phone companies in their competition with Bell Systems into the 1920's, when Bell also began using the automatic system. Throughout its history, Automatic Electric continued to develop improvements in the system, from the dial to the dial-and-progress tones; the Director, which facilitated large switching systems; innovations in procedures for long distance calling and toll calls, and many other features that were developed at its Van Buren Street headquarters. There were over 4,800 employees at the headquarters designing, building, engineering and carrying on the many occupations necessary to supply the industry with automatic dial telephones and switching systems. The company continued to grow, providing systems throughout the country and the world into the 1950s. The patented Strowger system was used until the invention of digital technology 70 years later. The original 1901 building and its 1907 additions retain a great degree of integrity representing the history of the company.

Development of the Telephone

Telephone systems consist of many parts, but three primary elements necessarily developed along parallel lines, and still exist today. These elements are the telephone itself, the transmitting system, and the switching system. The Automatic Electric Company evolved from innovations in the switching system, which were necessarily reflected in the transmitting system and in the telephones. On March 10, 1876, in Boston, Massachusetts, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. Thomas Watson, Bell's expert technician assistant, fashioned the device itself; composed of a wooden stand, a funnel, a cup of acid and copper wire. The first permanent outdoor telephone wire, strung in 1877, covered a distance of three miles. There were, however, many complications with that transmitting system, and Bell Telephone installed only 3,000 phones by the end of 1877. Commercial telephone service began in the United States in December of that year also, when Western Union created the American Speaking Telephone Company. The main selling point for their telephones was Thomas Edison's much improved transmitter, based on telegraph technology. Western Union by this time had 250,000 miles of telegraph wire strung over 100,000 miles of route.

The workable exchange, developed in 1878, enabled calls to be switched among any number of subscribers rather than requiring direct lines with exchanges being handled manually. On January 28, 1878, the first commercial switchboard in the United States began operating in New Haven, Connecticut with 21 telephones on 8 lines. A month later, Western Union opened the first large city exchange in San Francisco. No longer limited to people on the same wire, customers could now talk to many others on different lines. The public switched telephone network was born.

The early dial telephone systems were not automatic. Dial telephone systems derive their name from the use of a dial, or equivalent device, operated by a subscriber or operator to produce the interruptions of current that direct or control the switching process at the central office. The use of a dial, however, is much older than the telephone. It was suggested by William F. Cooke in 1836 in connection with telegraphy, and was first used in the dial telegraph of 1839. During succeeding years, it was the subject of many improvements, and was employed not only in dial telegraph systems, but in fire alarm and district messenger systems as well.[1]

On August 1, 1878 Thomas Watson filed for a ringer patent; a hammer operated by an electromagnet that struck two bells. Turning a crank on the calling telephone spun a magneto, producing an alternating or ringing current. Previously, people used a crude thumper to signal the called party, hoping someone would be around to hear it. The ringer was an immediate success. The Three Box phone consisted of three wooden boxes on the wall with a hand-held receiver, a transmitter, a magneto crank, and a battery box. One of the first telephones, the Butterstamp telephone, came into use in the early 1880s. This telephone combined the receiver and transmitter into one handheld unit. It was used

[1] John Brooks. *The Telephone Book* (New York: Riverwood Publishing) 1976. p. 15

by talking into one end, turning the instrument around, and listening to the other end. This clumsy arrangement evolved into the magneto crank phone with a second transmitter and receiver unit. This wall set used a crank to signal the operator. The Candlestick phone, also called the "Upright" was commonly used during the late 1890s. This was before the introduction of the one-piece handset. This phone was connected to a large wooden box called a "subset" which contained a battery, bell and magneto crank.[2]

Less than a year after Alexander Graham Bell's triumph at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876, the first telephones were brought to Chicago, and the first Bell exchange in the city, incorporated as Bell Telephone Company of Illinois, opened with seventy-five telephones on June 26, 1878. In 1881, the Chicago Telephone Company was incorporated as a competitive company to Bell, but several years later they merged as Illinois Bell Telephone Company. The company operated as a publicly regulated, privately owned utility with a monopoly franchise. The City of Chicago, in considering these rights, conceded that that telephone operations were a "natural monopoly."[3] There were, however, independent telephone companies emerging throughout the country, which competed with Bell throughout the years. By this time, also, the idea of a country-wide service was beginning to take shape. An important step toward the attainment of national service was the organization in 1885 of the American Telephone and telegraph Company. In 1900 this company absorbed the American Bell Telephone Company and became the headquarters company of the Bell System.

On July 19, 1881 Alexander Graham Bell was granted a patent for the metallic circuit, the concept of two wires connecting each telephone. Until that time a single iron wire connected telephone subscribers, just like a telegraph circuit. A conversation works over one wire since grounding each end provides a complete path for an electrical circuit. The lines, however, were particularly noisy, picking up noise from power lines, other telephone lines, telegraph lines, streetcars and machinery. The one wire, "grounded" system was later replaced with the two-wire, "metallic" system. This system used two wires to complete the electrical circuit, avoiding the ground altogether and thus providing a better sounding call. Another scientist, J.J. Carty, introduced two-wire services commercially in October of that year on a circuit between Boston and Providence. It cut noise greatly over those forty-five miles and heralded the beginning of long distance service. Still, it was not until 10 years later that Bell started converting grounded circuits to metallic ones, and ten years after that until completion.

The telephone switching system, whereby various lines may be connected, is essential. Telephone companies devoted years of research to developing and improving the switching system. The first switchboards were clumsy affairs of brass strips, buttons, and wires. They were operated, in the early years, by teenaged boys. After a few years, companies realized the benefits of having "pleasant-voiced

[2] Ibid. p. 26
[3] Illinois Bell Telephone Company, *A Golden Anniversary 1878 – 1928, The Story of Fifty Years of the Bell Telephone in Chicago,* (Chicago: Illinois Bell Telephone Company, 1928) p. 14

girls" at the switchboard, but neither Bell nor independent companies had yet come up with a way of eliminating the operator altogether. [4]

The Strowger System and the founding of Automatic Electric

The origins of the Automatic Electric Company lie with two men located half a continent apart. In 1889 Almon Strowger, a Kansas City businessman, devised a machine which would replace the switchboard operator. The story is that Strowger was an undertaker who had as his competition a man whose wife worked as a telephone operator. Whenever potential customers called the switchboard asking for Strowger, the operator would direct the call to her husband's business. Out of self-defense, Strowger determined to develop an automatic system so that he would not lose customers.

Joseph Harris, born in Chicago in 1854, in 1891 went searching the country for innovative inventions that could be highlighted at the World's Columbian Exposition, slated to open in Chicago in 1892. He heard of a man in Kansas City, Almon Strowger, who had invented a working model for an automatic telephone, whereby a human switchboard operator would no longer be needed. Harris, upon his arrival in Kansas, became enamored of the invention and recognized immediately an idea that had great potential for commercial development. He convinced Strowger to return to Chicago with him to develop it. Harris thereby became the first to promote the automatic telephone as a commercial utility, and raised the money to fund and found the company.

When Strowger came to Chicago, he and Harris arranged to have several model switches made from Strowger's drawings, and with the aid of three borrowed telephones an experimental system was set up. The first models were constructed and the first test of a switcher and 20 phones was accomplished at the Rookery Building, where Strowger and Harris had their early office.

The first patent for Strowger's invention was dated March 10, 1891. The original company was incorporated under the laws of Illinois on November 18, 1891, as Strowger Automatic Telephone Company, with a capital of $5,000,000. Harris was secretary and treasurer and Strowger was vice president. M.A. Meyer, a friend of Harris, was president.

As funds were needed, Harris interested a Baltimore group who sent a young engineer, A.E. Keith, then in the employ of the Brush Electric Company, to investigate the Strowger system. Keith at once recognized the possibilities of the system. Not only did he recommend it to the Baltimore group, but he remained with the Strowger group and contributed through many years to the development of the system. It was through Keith's research that the system improved to the point where it was ready for public installation in 1902. Keith eventually became vice president and chief engineer of the company, leading it through many additional innovations.

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[4] Ibid., p. 16

With the automatic system, a central office switch worked in conjunction with a similar switch at the subscriber's home. In the first model, push buttons were used on the telephones to send impulses of current, causing the central office switch to select the called line. However, this system was not like our push-button phones of today. To call number 89, for example, the user pushed the first button eight times and the second button nine times, with the mechanism moving over the line terminals at each push of the button. This Step-by-Step or SXS system replaced the switchboard operator for placing local calls, and was revolutionary, for now people could dial their desired number themselves. This patented switch, with variations, would be used until the invention of digital technology 70 years later.

The big break-through for the company came in 1892, when Harris and Strowger installed the first automatic exchange dial system to be placed in public service in the United States in La Porte, Indiana. It was installed with great fanfare and offered free service, since its objective was recognition of the automatic telephony as a practical idea. The first system had less than a hundred lines, since it had to have five wires leading from the central office to each telephone. It was a great success, and proved that the principle of the system was sound and also that the public was ready to accept such a change. A *Chicago Herald* article reporting on the grand opening event in LaPorte, Indiana, was prophetic:

> Out in Englewood there lives a white-haired gentleman on whose kindly face the telephone girls will do well to keep a watchful eye. His name is Almon Strowger and he is the inventor of a device which may, when brought to a state of perfection, take away the present employment of the young women who are the first to greet your ring on Professor Bell's talking machine.[5]

During the dedication festivities, Strowger commented that "millions of dollars had been expended since 1879 in experimenting with devices invented to meet the need, but not until now had one been found that proved satisfactory." [6] It was noted, however, that the system was not, at this time, practical for a larger city. A system for 9,000 telephones would require that each switch disk be connected with the system by 45,000 wires, since the system is a retrogression, wherein the number of wire connections for each additional phone is increased fivefold. Hence, Strowger continued improvements in the system, and the LaPorte exchange was replaced by a larger and improved exchange in 1893. That was followed by installations in 1893 at Ft. Sheridan and at the World's Columbian Exposition, using the same basic type of switch as the LaPorte installation. In a few years, the Strowger system was being used by number of small independent phone companies throughout the country. Such

[5] "Helloing Made Easy," *Chicago Herald,* November 4, 1892.
[6] Ibid.

exchanges were installed in Michigan City, Indiana and in Auburn and Rockaway, New York. The Bell System, which had its own research and development laboratories, persisted with manual switching systems even for smaller installations.

Each succeeding installation of the automatic system improved over the preceding ones, so that in 1895, a 400 line exchange was installed in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the largest up to that time. By 1896 the original complicated button system was replaced by an improved dial system, and more systems were installed in Trinidad, Colorado and Amsterdam, New York. In these early years, the company had manufacturing facilities at various places in Chicago, including Jefferson Street, then at Washington and Union streets, followed by a facility at 166-174 South Clinton.

In 1896, Strowger retired and moved to Florida, where he died in 1902. In 1901, Joseph Harris chartered the Automatic Electric Company to continue the development and marketing of the Strowger system. The Strowger Automatic Telephone Exchange remained as a company to hold the patents, issuing the rights to Harris's new company. When organized in 1901, C.D. Simpson was president, Joseph Harris was vice president, and A.G. Wheeler was secretary-treasurer. By 1908, the Strowger Automatic Telephone Company was completely merged into Automatic Electric Company.

Strowger's switch required different kinds of telephones from the Bell models which had no dials. Engineers A.E. Keith, J. Erickson and C.J. Erickson invented the rotating finger-wheel needed for a dial. The first machine switching telephones with finger wheels were placed in service at the city hall of Milwaukee, Wisconsin by the Automatic Electric Company. A particularly first large account for the company was a system for Grand Rapids with 5,000 telephones, which proved that Automatic Electric was over a major hurdle. But the number of lines needed for larger exchanges still limited the use of the system for metropolitan areas.

Automatic Electric Company and Chicago History

The Chicago Fire of 1871 began on the eastern edge of the Near West Side at 1001 South Jefferson, just a few blocks directly south of the site where Automatic Electric located thirty years later. Many of area's established industries and clusters of workers homes were destroyed in the fire. Following the fire, the area west of Ashland was immediately rebuilt with new homes and flats, and in the 1880s the eastern portion of the community developed into a densely populated working-class neighborhood. Between the residential areas, existing industries rebuilt and new factories were constructed into the 1920s. The time during which the Automatic Electric Company headquarters was built at the turn of the century was one of the busiest for industrial development in the neighborhood.

Up to this time, the home of the Strowger factory was moved from place to place but eventually settled on Jefferson Street, where the equipment was manufactured for the New Bedford and Fall River, Massachusetts, exchanges, completed in 1900 and 1901. In 1901, according to the 60 year company

report, Automatic Electric "was finally brought to a permanent location with the construction of the first of Automatic Electric's buildings located at the corner of Morgan and Van Buren Streets. This was completed in 1901." A series of historic photographs taken in the Automatic Electric Company building in 1903 illustrate the research and testing laboratory on the fifth floor, a very large tool-making department, and a large room filled with women engaged in switch wiring.

The new building was completed in the midst of rapid expansion of the industry. In 1900, there were 34,414 telephones in Chicago. Five years later, there were over 100,000.[7] It wasn't until this time that the City of Chicago was able to consider the merits of this home-town company, where Illinois Bell dominated telephone service. Bell as yet would show no interest in the automatic system, particularly since they did not hold the patents. In addition, the largest telephone equipment manufacturing facility for the Bell System was located in Chicago - the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company, which was their manufacturing branch.

Finally, Chicago newspaper headlines of 1903 touted, "Girl-less Phones to be in Use in Chicago Soon. German Government Buys European Rights." The public was amazed at this new system, which avoided the prejudices and problems of using people for telephone switching. The merits and features of the system were discussed in story after story in newspapers and magazines. "Goodbye to the Hello Girl" was a prominent expression, as was "Surer than human hands." Published descriptions stressed the quickness and dependability of the new method. An early exhibit extolled the virtues of the "Girl-less, Cuss-less, Wait-less Telephone."[8] The possibilities were beginning to be seen as unlimited, but yet proved to be slow.

The coming of the automatic phone system contributed to the development of Chicago in unexpected ways. Automatic Electric Company's deal with Illinois Telephone and Telegraph Company for 20,000 automatic telephones during the five year period from 1904 to 1909 stipulated that while Automatic Electric Company would supply the equipment and installations, the city, in order to handle the great number of lines needed, would construct a network of underground tunnels to carry them. No charge was to be made for this service until 10,000 telephones or at least half of the stations were completed. With the tendency of Chicagoans to over-engineer, the tunnel network was constructed to be quite a bit larger than necessary to carry the telephone cables, and so was laid out with tracks and an overhead power system. Consequently, Illinois Telephone and Telegraph found it more profitable to lease the tunnels for underground delivery and utility services, thus saving time and congestion on city streets. The Illinois Telephone and Telegraph Company soon became the Chicago Tunnel Company, and their tunnel system is still used extensively today.

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[7] Illinois Bell Telephone Company, p. 14
[8] Automatic Electric Company, "Strowger Automatic: A Sixty Year Report," 1952, p.8

Gradually, despite the Bell System, there were more Automatic Electric Company installations in Chicago. Large installations during this time included the new Sears, Roebuck and Company headquarters complex on Chicago's West Side, which in 1905 installed a 200-line Automatic system, as well as a system for their competitor, Montgomery Ward and Company, which built a new headquarters in 1908. Other local systems were installed at Armour & Company, Swift and Company, and Municipal Pier.

Expansion of the Company

Harris and other executives of Automatic Electric determined early on that, with the dominance of the Bell System in the United States, the best opportunities for company expansion lie with independent companies and with international business. As the system gained acceptance, these two primary factors led to the rapid expansion of the company – recognition in Europe and throughout the world, and the expanded use by independent telephone companies in the United States. By 1902, Germany was negotiating for European rights to the system. In 1909, Harris went to Europe and completed contractual arrangements with Siemens and Halske which resulted in the installation of automatic equipment in many European cities. By 1911, a factory was set up in England to manufacture Strowger equipment there. Australia adopted the system as its standard in 1911, and New Zealand soon followed. Other pioneer users were Cuba, Hawaii, Alaska, the Philippines, and Argentina. The company slogan in 1914 reflected its international presence, "the sun never sets on the automatic telephone." [9]

Important national contracts during this time included an installation in 1905 for the United States War Department, and installations for post offices, government offices, hospitals, railroads, and educational and financial institutions. [10] In addition, business continued to grow with the independent telephone companies.

> "It is generally agreed that without the Automatic system, the Independent telephone field which began to emerge after the original Bell telephone patents had expired, would have had a much tougher time. But when the Independent operating company was able to get telephone equipment of such dependability and ingenuity of design that its service surpassed that given by manual competitors, the Independent field mushroomed into a large and virile industry."[11]

By selling to the independent telephone companies, Automatic Electric enabled them to be competitive with Bell Telephone, thereby creating better service for all. One result of this was continued growth

[9] Ibid., p. 5
[10] By the 1920s, over 600 instruments were in service in every important arsenal in the country.
[11] Ibid., p. 9

into larger, metropolitan exchanges. Dallas, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Lincoln, Columbus, Akron, and Youngstown were typical of the names that were added to the growing list of Strowger users.

At last, in 1918, the Bell System, which had been watching the development of Strowger equipment with growing interest, placed its first order with Automatic Electric for an 11,000-line exchange installation in Norfolk, Virginia. The automatic switch system was needed because Norfolk, the largest Navy base in the world, was experiencing unprecedented growth at the end of World War I as the headquarters for naval operations in the Atlantic. This was a landmark event in the Bell system, as their first use of an automatic dial phone system.

The Telephone Wars and Bell Telephone
1919 was a pivotal year for Automatic Electric. In spite of their order for Norfolk, Bell held out on converting to the new automatic system and continued to promote their own manual systems, thus increasing the fierce competition and escalating the Bell –Independent "phone company wars" of the early 1900s. Due primarily to the competition, despite its successes Automatic Electric was nearly bankrupt at this time, with the need to reinvest capital back into the company.

The major turning point resulted from the strike of Bell telephone operators in Boston in 1919, at the time of the battles between the Bell Telephone Company and independent companies. Theodore Gary, head of the Theodore Gary and Company group, had for many years been active in the operation of independent telephone companies in the Middle West. Due to Automatic Electric's dire financial situation at this time, he was able to acquire the controlling options to purchase the company. When Gary heard about the Boston strike he immediately went to the offices of AT & T in New York, which controlled the Bell System. Not only did Gary convince them to undertake a long-term contract under which Automatic Electric would supply large quantities of equipment for Bell exchanges, he also convinced them to pay him an immediate 10% down payment on the contract. He immediately used the down payment money to exercise his options, thereby obtaining control of Automatic Electric Company, saving it financially, and penetrating the Bell System permanently, with one brilliant move. Gary took over as President of the company, while retaining Harris as Chairman until 1923.

From that point, AT & T/ Bell Telephone gradually increased its use of the Strowger Automatic System. This was reflected in Chicago where, by 1928, Illinois Bell reported that "a number of Chicago's telephones are operated automatically, that is, subscribers by the use of dials on their telephone instruments operate the switching apparatus themselves. This system is now in use in four central offices."[12]

[12] Illinois Bell Telephone Company, p. 22.

Continued Technological Innovations and Growth

Saved from bankruptcy, Automatic Electric grew steadily in the 1920's. The technical staff never ceased its research and development of new technical improvements and adaptations to new requirements. At this time, there were four basic telephone models with automatic dials that were being manufactured by the company: the Desk Type Automatic Telephone, the Wall Type Automatic Telephone, the Hand Type Automatic Telephone (hung by a hook under the desk), and the Mine Type Automatic Telephone. [13] The efficiency of the automatic telephone system was described in a brochure at the time, thusly:

> An efficient switchboard operator can set up interior connections in an average of 22 seconds. The Automatic Telephone does this in four seconds or less. This means saving 18 seconds on every interior call, or 45 hours – a full business week – each year for every man who uses the telephone for communications about the establishment.[14]

In 1924 the invention of the Director for register- sender-translator operation made the Strowger system more economical for large metropolitan areas such as greater London. They also made improvements in toll dialing, which had been in use since 1910, and developed Strowger Automatic Toll Ticketing in 1937. This system provides for the completion of toll calls by means of automatic switching equipment. Other innovations included Progress Tones (dial tones, busy tones, ring tones, etc.); toll dialing for longer distance; and improvements in subscriber station equipment, all typical of the innovations which kept the company successful. Additional important advancements in the Strowger Automatic Toll Ticketing system providing for nationwide toll dialing were made in 1950. These improvements included automatically produced machine-made call records from which standard business machines could print subscriber's bills. [15]

Later History

The emphasis on both international marketing and continued technological innovation paid off. By the mid-1920s, although there was limited competition from other companies who were developing their own automatic dial systems, Automatic Electric was licensing about 80 percent of the automatic telephone equipment in the world. It became the second largest telecommunications manufacturer in the United States after Western Electric. In 1927, a major turning point in international communications was reached when the first regular transcontinental telephone service opened between the United States and England. Automatic Electric, which by this time had many installations and factories in England and other countries, benefited and was a major participant in these events as well

[13] The Mine Type Automatic Telephone was enclosed in an iron box. It was used in mines, railway yards, docks and places where the telephone was exposed to the weather.
[14] Automatic Electric Company, "At Your Finger's End," Promotional brochure, ca. 1920.
[15] L.L. Ruggles, "Recent Developments in Strowger Automatic Toll Ticketing," Automatic Electric, May, 1950.

as the subsequent expansion of telephone service around the world.

By 1952, when Automatic Electric Company celebrated "60 Years of Strowger Automatic," three-quarters of the world's automatic telephones, in over 60 nations, were based on Strowger's patent. There were over 4,800 employees at the Chicago headquarters designing, building, engineering and carrying on the many occupations necessary to supply the industry. Thousands more were working in affiliated factories in Canada, Belgium, and Italy with distribution offices world-wide. The company eventually became AG Communications and was purchased by General Telephone Services (GTS) which became General Electric. In 1957, Automatic Electric was listed as the leading manufacturing organization of the GT system. The original 1901 building and its 1907 additions have retained sufficient integrity, both in the interior and the exterior, to represent the long history of the company.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES:

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
1	16	445883	4636262	3			
2				4			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: **See Continuation Sheet**

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: **See Continuation Sheet**

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Susan M. Baldwin **DATE:** May 1, 2002

ORGANIZATION: Baldwin Historic Properties

STREET & NUMBER: 233 East Wacker Drive, #410 **TELEPHONE:** 312.228.0707

CITY OR TOWN: Chicago **STATE:** IL **ZIP CODE:** 60601

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS

A USGS MAP (7.5 OR 15 MINUTE SERIES) INDICATING THE PROPERTY'S LOCATION.
A FLOOR PLAN(S) FOR INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES
A SKETCH MAP FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND PROPERTIES HAVING LARGE ACREAGE OR NUMEROUS RESOURCES.

PHOTOGRAPHS

REPRESENTATIVE BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PROPERTY.

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Premier Center, L.L.C. c/o Robert Berliner Jr., Berliner Development Partners L.L.C.

STREET & NUMBER: 900 North Michigan Ave., Suite 2002 **TELEPHONE:** 312.482.8100

CITY OR TOWN: Chicago **STATE:** IL **ZIP CODE:** 60611

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description
Lots 1 through 15 and lots 18 through 30 in Roach's Addition, East ½, South West ¼, of Section 10, Township 16 North, R. 2 East.

Boundary Justification
The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with the Automatic Electric Company.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Automatic Electric Company Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ILLINOIS, Cook

DATE RECEIVED: 10/10/02 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/01/02
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/17/02 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/24/02
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 02001386

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	~~Y~~ N	NATIONAL:	~~N~~ Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Very well-written nomination. The NHL staff should take a look at this, as it has possibilities under NHL Criterion 1.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept - A

REVIEWER Boland DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____ DATE 11/20/02

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N


W VAN BUREN ST
W MORGAN ST

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO., IL.
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL.
6. N & E ELEVS. LOOKING SW
7. (1.)


OF WORK

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO., IL.
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 253 E. WACKER DR., CHICAGO, IL
6. N. ELEV, LOOKING SE
7. 2

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO., IL.
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL,
6. N. ELEV., LOOKING S
   DETAIL, ORIGINAL ENTRY BAY
7. (4)

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL.
6. N. ELEV. LOOKING SW
   1907 ADD.
7. (7)

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO., IL.
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL
6. E. ELEV., LOOKING W
   DETAIL
7. (9.)


Carlyn Berthoff
CATERING

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO., IL.
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL
6. E. & S. ELEVS., LOOKING NW
7. (10.)

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO, IL.
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL.
6. INTERIOR, 2ND FL., 1901 CONST.
CEILING DETAIL

7. (13)

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO., IL.
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL.
6. INTERIOR, 4TH FL. 1901 CONST.
LOOKING SE

7. (14)


EXIT
PLEASE
NO SMOKING

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO., IL
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/23/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL.
6. INTERIOR, 1ST FL. 1907 CONNECTING STRUCTURE
7. (16)

1. AUTOMATIC ELECTRIC CO. BLDG.
2. COOK CO, IL.
3. S. BALDWIN
4. 5/28/02
5. 233 E. WACKER, CHICAGO, IL.
6. INTERIOR, 1ST FLOOR,
1907 ADD. LOOKING SW
7. (17)

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name	County, State	Reference Number
Automatic Electric Company Building	Chicago, Illinois	02001386

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

___ Nomination Form

_X_ Photographs (#s 3, 5-6, 8, 11-12,15)

___ USGS Map

3468 II SE
(PARK RIDGE)

USGS
science for a changing world

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

CHICAGO LOOP QUADRANGLE
ILLINOIS–COOK CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

3468 II SW
(EVANSTON)

3467 IV NE
(RIVER FOREST)

(BERWYN)
3467 IV SE

(ENGLEWOOD)
3467 I SW

(JACKSON PARK)
3467 I SE

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Derived from imagery taken 1988 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery taken 1997; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLSS and survey control current as of 1992
Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: Illinois coordinate system, east zone (transverse Mercator)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

MN GN
2½°
44 MILS
0°28'
8 MILS
UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

1 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
AND ILLINOIS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ILLINOIS
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

CHICAGO LOOP, ILL.

1997

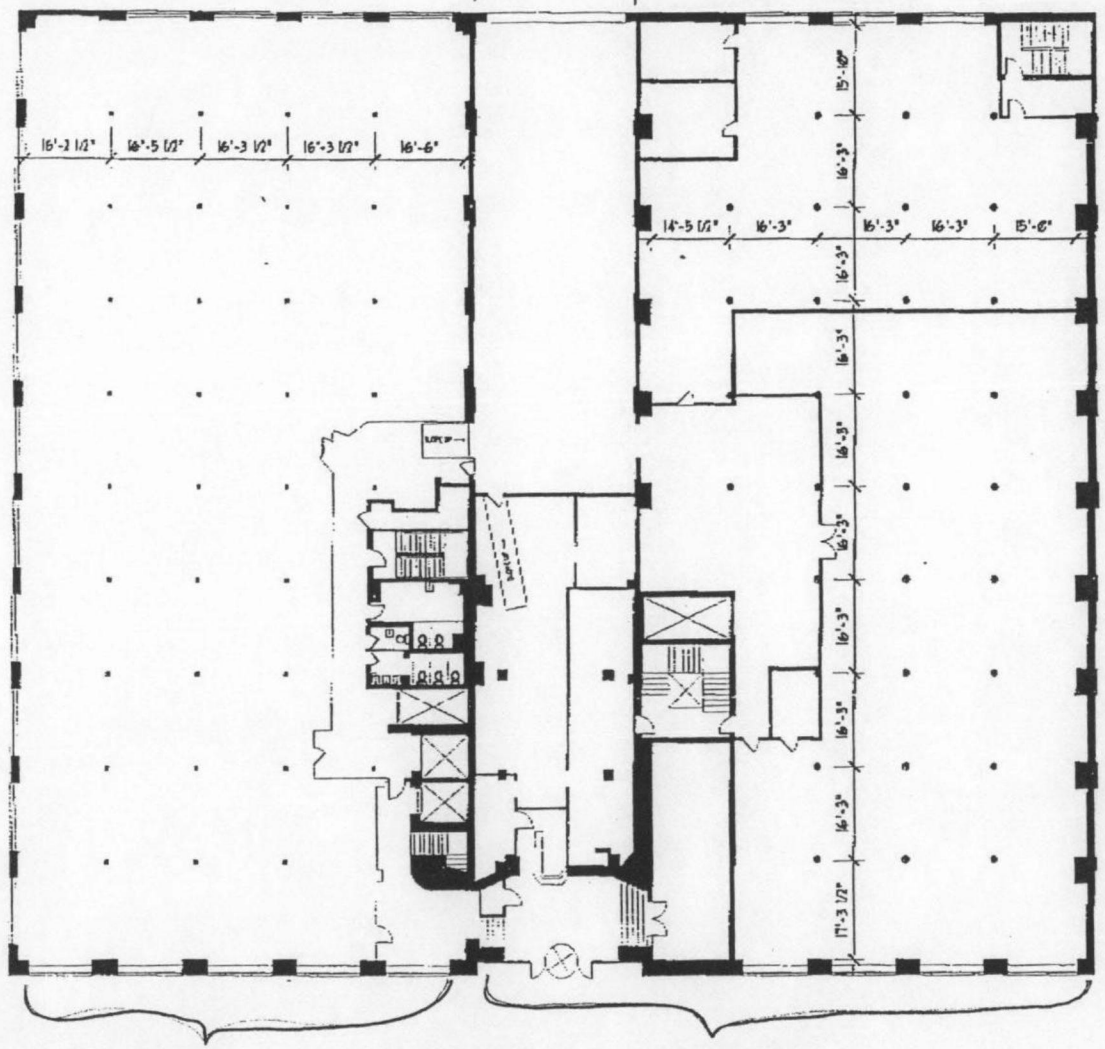
NIMA 3467 I NW–SERIES V863

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1999

ISBN 0-607-91717-6

Automatic Electric Company
1001-1019 W. Van Buren St
Cook Co. IL
Zone 16
E 445883
N 4636262

ca 1950, courtyard filled in



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chicago, il 60607
p. 312.226.4488
f. 312.226.4499
www.hparchitecture.com
hartshorne + plunkard architecture

1001-1033 WEST VAN BUREN

1001 WEST VAN BUREN — CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SCALE	DRAWING	SK#
1/32" = 1'-0"	1ST FLOOR PLAN	—
DATE		
06.05.02		

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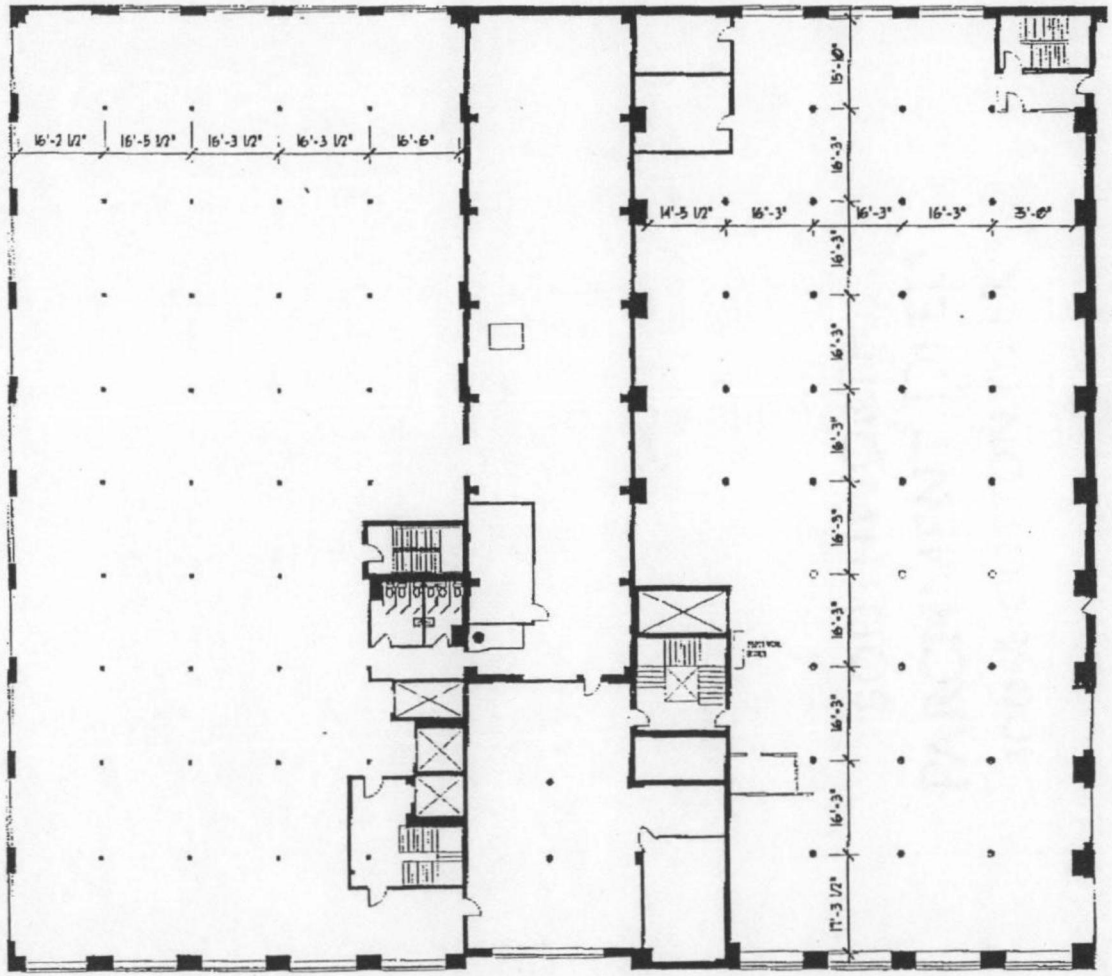
Jun 05, 2002 - 10:24AM



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SCALE	DRAWING	SK#
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DATE		
06.05.02		

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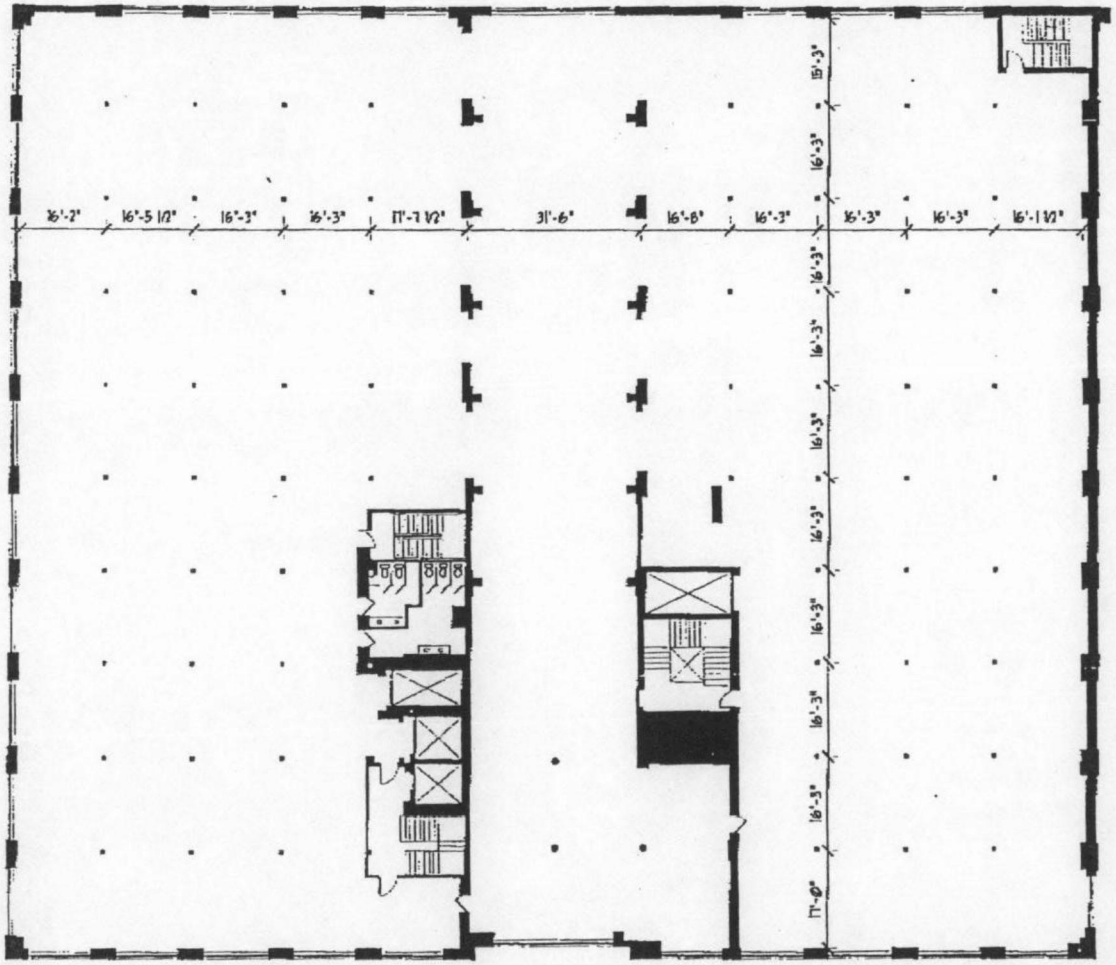

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1001 WEST VAN BUREN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SCALE	DRAWING	SK#
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DATE		
06.05.02		

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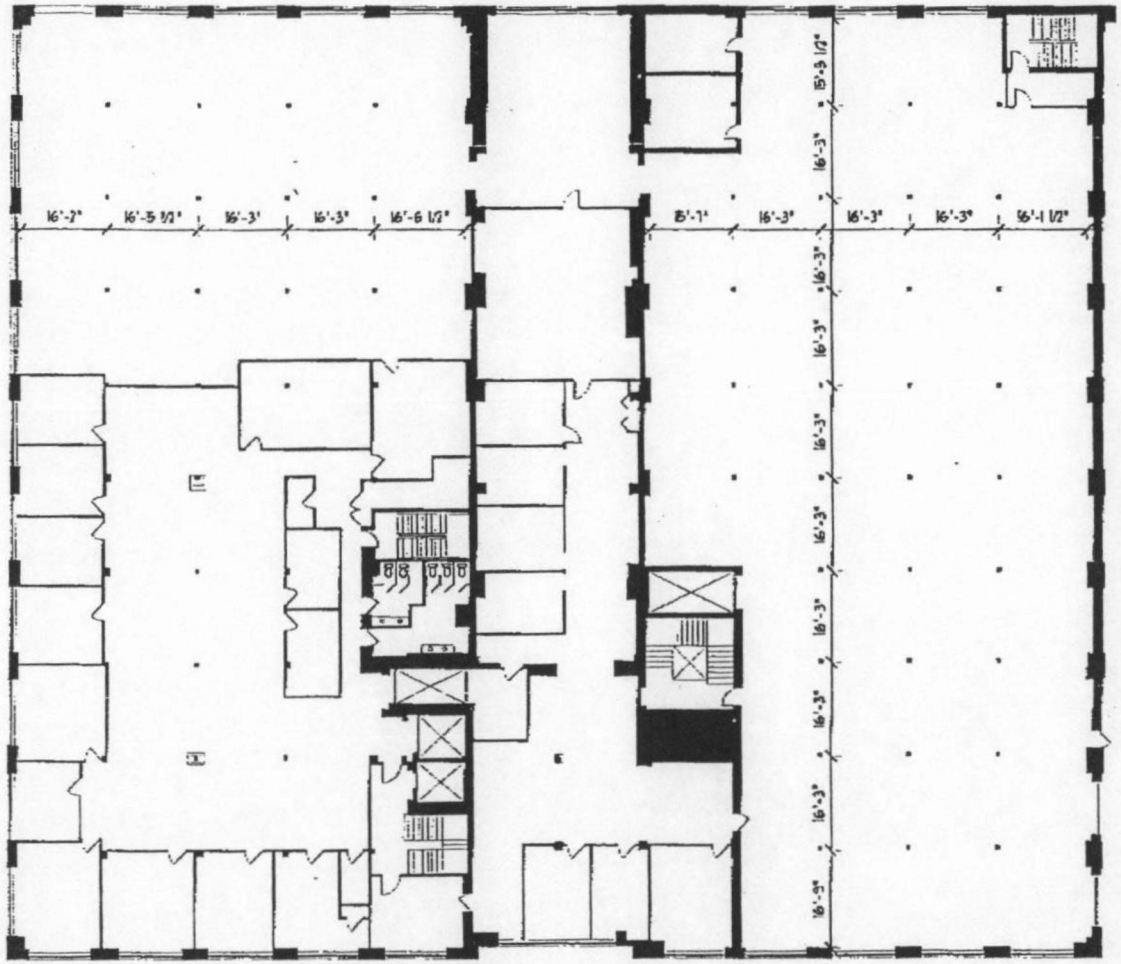

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SCALE	DRAWING	SK#
1/32" = 1'-0"	4TH FLOOR PLAN	4
DATE		
06.05.02		

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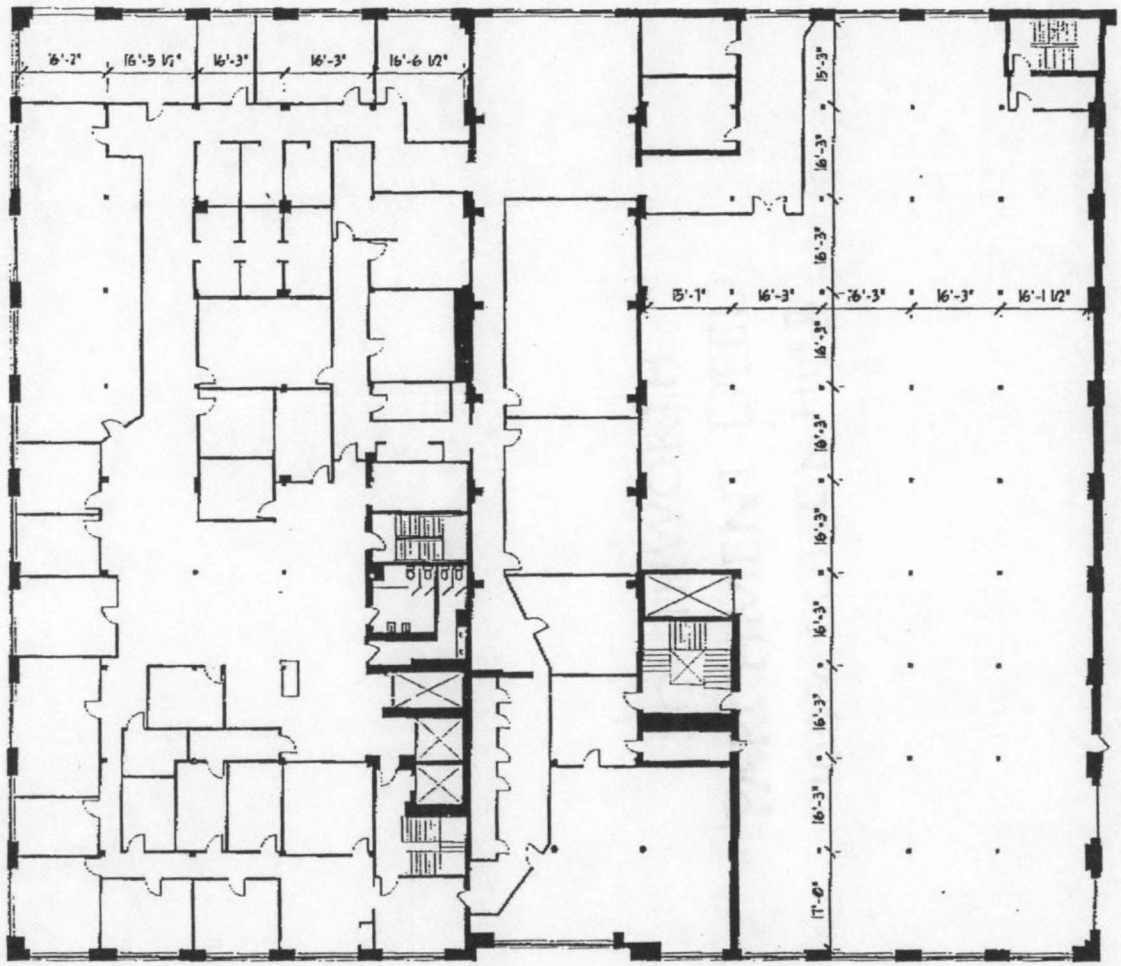

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1001-1033 WEST VAN BUREN

1001 WEST VAN BUREN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SCALE	DRAWING	SK#
1/32" = 1'-0"	5TH FLOOR PLAN	5
DATE		
06.05.02		

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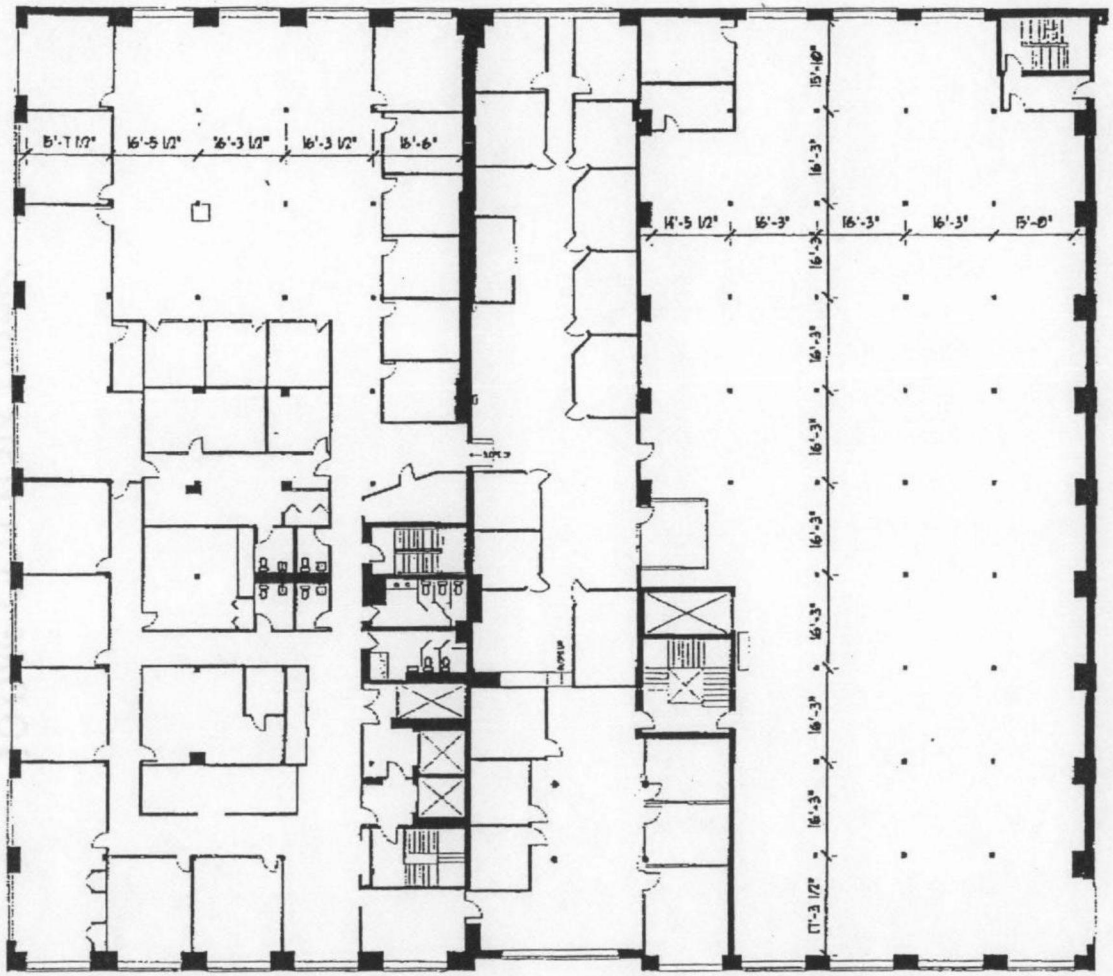

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1001-1033 WEST VAN BUREN

1001 WEST VAN BUREN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SCALE	DRAWING	SK#
1/32" = 1'-0"	6TH FLOOR PLAN	6
DATE		
06.05.02		

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Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

1 Old State Capitol Plaza • Springfield, Illinois 62701-1507 • (217) 782-4836 • TTY (217) 524-7128

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Richard M. Daley, Mayor of the City of Chicago
Brian Goeken, Landmarks Division, Department of Planning and Development

FROM: Amy Easton, Assistant Coordinator, National Register and Survey AHE

DATE: June 7, 2002

SUBJECT: Preliminary Opinion on the Automatic Electric Company Building, 1001-1019 West Van Buren Street, Chicago, Illinois

The Automatic Electric Company Building, 1001-1019 West Van Buren Street, Chicago, Illinois, is a good candidate for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Automatic Electric Company qualifies for its local significance under Criterion A, for its association with wit communications and invention. The building was the home of the company that developed, refined, and disseminated the automatic dial telephone system. Known as the Strowger System, it changed communications throughout the world. The building is significant from 1901, when the company was chartered and the original building was constructed, until 1952, when the company still resided in the building. The Automatic Electric Company Building is the building most closely associated with the history of the company. It maintains sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register.

City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning
and Development

Alicia Mazur Berg
Commissioner

Suite 1600
33 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602
(312) 744-3200
(312) 744-9140 (FAX)
(312) 744-2578 (TTY)

http://www.cityofchicago.org

August 6, 2002

Tracey A. Sculle
Survey & National Register Coordinator
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
1 Old State Capitol
Springfield, IL 62702

Re: Chicago nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for
- **the Automatic Electric Company Building, 1001 W. Van Buren St.,**
- **Fuller Park, 331 W. 45th St.,**
- **the Motor Row Multiple Property Documentation Form,**
- **the Motor Row District, and**
- **the Maxwell-Briscoe Automobile Co. Showroom, 1737 S. Michigan Ave.**

Dear Ms. Sculle:

This is in response to your letters of June 10, June 12, and July 23, 2002, to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks asking for the Commission's comments on the nominations of the properties referenced above to the National Register of Historic Places. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the City of Chicago is given the opportunity to comment on local nominations to the National Register prior to being considered by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council.

At its regular meeting of August 1, 2002, the Commission voted unanimously to endorse the National Register listings for all five nominations. The Commission found that:

- the **Automatic Electric Company Building** met Criterion A for communications and invention as the building most closely associated with the company that developed, refined and disseminated the automatic dial telephone system;
- **Fuller Park** met Criteria A and C for its national significance as part of the innovative plan by the South Park Commission in 1903 to create small neighborhood parks with recreation programs and social services in working-class Chicago neighborhoods;
- the **Motor Row Multiple Property Documentation Form** documents Chicago's "Motor Row," roughly centered on S. Michigan Ave. between 14th and 24th Streets, as the largest, most intact early "motor colony," or group of buildings associated with the automobile sales and service industry, in the United States, and establishes the historic contexts or themes for evaluating the buildings historically associated with Motor Row, including the history of automobile-related businesses, the development of the auto showroom as an important building type, and the architects that designed the buildings;
- the **Motor Row District** documents the core area of Motor Row, centered on S. Michigan Ave., between Cermak Road and 24th Place, as significant under Criteria A for commerce and C for architecture for its associations with the historic contexts documented in the Motor Row Multiple Property Documentation form; and
- the **Maxwell-Briscoe Automobile Co. Showroom**, as a significant automobile showroom building, meets Criteria A for commerce and C for architecture for its associations with the historic contexts documented in the Motor Row Multiple Property Documentation form.

Please contact Terry Tatum of my staff at 312-744-9147 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Brian Goeken
Deputy Commissioner
Landmarks Division

cc: Susan Baldwin
Julia Bachrach
Linda Peters

Factory : Morgan and Van Buren Streets, Chicago, Illinois

EA. 1902